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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Tuesday 2nd April 2024**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors:

L.	Barlow	(Deputy Town Mayor in the Chair)
E.	Adelaja	
P.	Barlow	
J.C.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
L.	Headley	
P.	Heath	
T.	Hewitt	
R.	Playle	
R.	Ramage	
A.	Sloma	
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

195. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Ager, J.M. Coleman and J. Martin. E. Williams and Councillor B. Taylor were absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

196. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 5th March 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

197. INTERESTS

No interests were declared at the time but at Minute 208 – Town Hall Improvements, Councillor Heath declared a non-pecuniary interest as a fig tree had been planted in the Period Garden in memory of his late father.

198. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

199. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Councillor Heath, as a Member of Braintree District Council, explained that as the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel, he had been involved with the issue of the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) proposing to charge for one-hour parking in Newland Street. The NEPP had met on 21st March 2024 and the minutes were on the District Council's website. It appeared that some Councils involved in the partnership were looking at the Terms of Reference with a view to leaving the scheme. All issues would be examined and there would be a full meeting, to which the public could attend, on 20th June 2024. The importance of publicising the meeting was stressed.

Councillor Ramage said that the District Council had now approved planning consent for the Community Centre off Haygreen Road.

Councillor Playle, as Essex County Councillor for Witham Northern, considered that the NEPP's plans for charging to park in Newland Street were retreating but it had been noted that more enforcement was being undertaken at the moment. He referred to an email circulated by Councillor Derrick Louis, ECC, about changes to the Local Highways Panel but there is no date set for the next meeting. He noted that the Ride London was being re-routed. He had been on a site visit with a highways liaison officer looking at Mill Lane where tarmac was missing around the drain covers. He had also asked for the road to be swept. He said that the Community Safety Initiative fund was open until 12th May 2024 and would give grants of between £500 and £2,000 to keep residents safe. He was also waiting to receive details of the contact for the issues raised under tackling speeding in Witham.

200. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 1st March to 25th March 2024 were received.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

201. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk's report on matters arising was received. Dates of the Pop-Up stalls were noted and Members asked to assist.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

202. FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The Financial Risk Assessment and recommendations from the Financial Scrutiny Panel were received.

Members considered the assessment to be very robust and demonstrated a high level of scrutiny which would feed into the internal and external audits.

RESOLVED That the Financial Risk Assessment and recommendations from the Financial Scrutiny Panel be received and noted.

203. RIDE LONDON

A verbal update on Ride London, being held in Witham on Saturday 25th May 2024 was received.

The Town Clerk hoped that someone would have attended from Ride London to explain details of the event but they had taken on board the rail replacement buses and rerouted from Maldon Road into Laurence Avenue, Spinks Lane, Highfields Road and then out of town, which would cause less disruption. She said that a representative from Ride London would attend the next Town Council Meeting.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

204. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Planning and Transport Committee held 5th & 19th March 2024

Minutes 222 to 243.

Councillor P. Barlow, Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee, gave a report of the Meetings.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Planning and Transport Committee be received.

(b) Policy and Resources Committee held 19th March 2024

Minutes 40 to 49.

Councillor P. Barlow, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, gave a report of the Meeting.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Policy and Resources Committee be received.

205. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A (S3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

206. FUNDING REPORT

The Funding Report was received.

RESOLVED That the Funding Report be received and noted.

207. LAND TRANSFER

A Land Transfer report was received.

RESOLVED That the Land Transfer report be received and noted.

208. TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

A report was received.

Whilst this matter was being discussed Councillor Heath declared a non-pecuniary interest as a fig tree had been planted in the Period Garden in memory of his late father.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.20 p.m.

Councillor L. Barlow
Chairman

NS/GK/3.4.2024

DRAFT